

BILLIONS OF STAMPS.

UNCLE SAM PRINTS AN ENORMOUS NUMBER EACH YEAR.

All kinds and colors, from the pink two-center to the lovely one hundred-dollar stamp—how they are turned out by the Washington Bureau.

Uncle Sam makes and issues in the course of a year postage and other stamps to the number of more than four billions. The exact number for the last year of which record is obtainable, says the New York World, was 4,243,289,261. It is hard for the human mind to realize the magnitude of a sum as great as four billions. A better idea, probably, can be obtained of the size of the stamp output for a year by the statement that if they were pasted together, end for end, the strip thus obtained would encircle the earth seven times around at the equator.

There were all sorts and conditions of stamps in this aggregate of four billions. There were postage stamps, from the humble little one-cent and the familiar pink two-center that every one sees to the lovely one hundred-dollar stamp that lives an exclusive life and never shows itself to the vulgar herd. The latter is called a periodical stamp. It is sold to the publishers of periodicals, who present it to the postmaster with so many pounds of mail matter, and the stamp is then cancelled and kept in a book. Over ten thousand of these were pointed last year.

There were about one hundred million of the long green beer stamps used in the internal revenue service, that you see the barkeeper remove from the bungalow when he taps a fresh keg. There were about four hundred million of the little green stamps that seal the end of a cigarette box. There were more than half a billion of tobacco strip stamps, with countless millions of other kinds.

The everyday two-cent stamp, with its cheerful pink color and mucilaginous back, was printed to the number of a little more than two billions. If the magnitude of this number is difficult to grasp, it is easy enough to measure a two-cent stamp and figure for one's self how many thousand miles those

accounted for and locked in a vault. Until the last plate is in no employ of the division is allowed to leave the building. The plate now being finished, it is



PRESSING THE STAMP SHEETS.

sent to the pressroom. Some of the stamps are printed upon hand presses and others upon revolving steam presses. The day I visited the Bureau the hand pressmen were working upon beer stamps. There were twenty of these upon a sheet, and the printer and his assistant were enabled to turn out from 700 to 800 sheets a day. The pressman's assistant is always a young girl, as a woman's deft touch is required to handle the thin sheets of paper and place them accurately under the press.

The paper upon which the stamps are printed is made especially for this purpose, and every sheet of it is counted. In fact, from the time the paper enters the press until it emerges a sheet of stamps in the storage rooms it passes through fourteen divisions, every one of which registers the sheet, and these must tally as to totals at the close of the day before an employe is permitted to leave the building.

Every time the pressman runs a plate through his machine he removes it and reinks it. Upon this largely depends the perfection of the impression. After inking the plate he rubs the surplus ink from the surface with a brush. Then he passes his hands



PRINTING INTERNAL REVENUE STAMPS.

two billions would stretch if pasted end to end.

All of the stamps used by the United States are printed at Washington in the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, the same institution that turns out the paper money of the Government. Formerly they were made by the bank note companies in New York, but in 1893 Uncle Sam concluded that as he was going into the printing business very extensively at his capital he might as well save the profits on the stamp making. The Bureau makes the plates from which the stamps are printed, does the press work and manufactures the mucilage. Only the paper and the ink are purchased in open market. This preparation of the mucilage is an art in itself, and is conducted upon purely hygienic principles, for the benefit of the several billions of people who annually lick postage stamps.



A STAMP ENGRAVER.

The operation of the manufacture of postage stamps through the several branches is an exceedingly interesting one to follow. A small army of men and young women, skilled artisans, are employed in the work, and the great red-brick building on the banks of the Potomac under the shadow of the Washington monument is a busy bee hive for eight hours in the day.

The first step in the manufacture of postage and revenue stamps is the making of the plates from which they are to be printed. The plate for the ordinary two-cent stamp of everyday use is a sheet of steel twenty-one inches by about thirteen inches. The engraver uses a sheet of soft steel upon which he engraves the design of four hundred stamps.

The custody of these plates, together with others, is confided to one man. Every afternoon the plates must be

over a cake of chalk and rubs the plate briskly with his bare palms. This cleans the exposed parts of the plate thoroughly and leaves the ink in the lines which are to convey the impression to the paper. The printer soon becomes a mass of ink from his hands to his elbows, and sooner or later communicates it to his apron. A carmine colored ink is used in printing the two-cent stamps, and the pressroom has a decidedly sanguinary appearance. The young lady assistants average about \$1.25 a day, while the pressmen run from \$4 to \$6 a day in earning capacity.

Where the steam presses are used four steel plates, each one printing 400 stamps, work upon an endless chain passing in front of the pressman. In this operation his duties are confined to cleaning the plates with his hands, as described above, the machinery doing the inking and pressing. He can press about seven sheets every sixty seconds, and has two young women to assist him, one to feed the press and the other to remove the sheets.

The sheets of stamps are now ready to be gummed, perforated and divided. After the ink has been dried and the sheets pressed flat they are sent to another room, where another gang handle them. The gumming machine is a simple apparatus which distributes an even flow of mucilage upon the reverse side of the stamp. It is done automatically, so that there is no waste and no surplus of mucilage upon any part of the sheet. The mucilage is composed of glucose and dextrose, mixed in stipulated quantities and absolutely harmless.

When the sheets are coated with mucilage they pass upon an endless chain through a steam chest about sixty feet long, where they are subjected to a temperature of about 135 degrees, coming out after several minutes thoroughly dried. Then they go to a hydraulic press to be pressed flat, having become warped in the steam chest. The sheets are laid between stiff cardboards and a stack of them put into the machine, where they are subjected to a pressure of 5000 pounds to the square inch. There are no wrinkles left when they emerge from this gentle squeezing.

Their next journey is to the perforating machines, operated by skillful young women. This is apparently a simple piece of work, but it requires close attention to feed the machine, so that the perforating wheels run straight down the spaces between the stamps. Even with the utmost care slips occur, and a row of stamps is perforated down the middle. Every spoiled sheet is preserved, however, to be accounted for, and if so much as a corner of a stamp is torn off it must be

patched on again, so as to present a whole sheet to the next checker.

One of the most interesting places in the building is the room where the stamps are examined and counted. This is an immense apartment, filled with long tables, at which several scores of young women are working. Piled upon the tables in front of them are stacks of ten dollar, fifty dollar or one hundred dollar bills, government bonds and sheets of stamps. A rustling sound like the whisper of the wind through a thousand trees fills the room, as the counters rapidly turn the bills and sheets, keeping a mental tab upon the number, while their eyes, trained to the utmost vigilance, seek out imperfections in the printing.

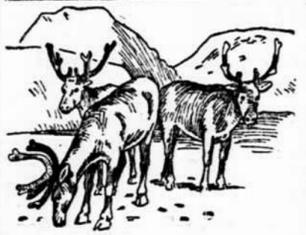
I saw one young woman at work counting and examining the stamps whose record was from ten thousand to twelve thousand sheets a day. Her fingers seemed to fairly fly as she lifted the sheets, and although it was but a fraction of a second during which the stamps passed under her gaze, her quick eye would detect the least imperfection, passing over two hundred stamps in that time. For this skillful and exacting work these young women are paid from \$1.50 to \$2 per day.

When the perfect sheets are thus assorted and counted, they pass to the storage vault, a fireproof and airtight structure. The Bureau keeps a stock of about six hundred million stamps on hand constantly. They are furnished to the Postoffice Department at the rate of about twelve millions a day, upon requisition by the Third Assistant Postmaster General. A steel wagon, with padlocked doors and accompanied by a guard of armed men, conveys the stamps to the Postoffice Department. This wagon is also used to transport currency and bank notes to the Treasury Department, and goes trundling along the street with millions of money inside of it.

KLONDIKE PALACE CARS.

First Effort to Put Reindeer to Use in America.

The rush to the Klondike has been the means of establishing a novel transportation line at Circle City, Alaska. Twenty sturdy bucks have been selected from the United States Government reindeer herd at Teller's Station and are now on their way to the mining districts. This is the first effort to press the reindeer into the



ALL ABOARD FOR THE KLONDIKE.

practical commercial service of the civilized American; heretofore the Eskimo dog has been used in all expeditions through the Klondike country. That the reindeer possesses tremendous advantages over the Eskimo dog is illustrated in the matter of their respective food. That of the dog must be carried, while the reindeer paws the snow from the roots on which he subsists.—New York World.

Houses Without Chimneys.

It is curious, though true, that of all the houses, dwellings, stores, hotels and other buildings that dot the island of Key West, Fla., from one shore to the other, not one of them has a chimney or anything that will answer the purpose of a chimney. Handsome residences and lowly hovels are alike in this respect, and from an eminence gazing out over acres of roofs on all sides one is struck with the want of something to complete the symmetry of the picture. Wood and coal or fuel of any kind are unknown quantities, as the tropical atmosphere furnishes all the heat required, and for cooking purposes sticks of carbon are used, which are sold by peddlers, who hawk their wares about the streets.—Atlanta Constitution.

PRINCE OF PIGEONS.

He Few 1000 Miles in Seventy-five Hours and Holds the World's Record.

Pedro, the great homing pigeon which broke the world's record for 1000 miles in his swift journey in the air from New Orleans to Mishawaka, Ind., is the pride of the Mishawaka Homing Club. Pedro's superb race was made in seventy-five hours total, or less than fifty hours of actual flying. Carrier pigeons never work after



PEDRO, PRINCE OF CARRIERS.

dark. Pedro is a pretty red pigeon, is three years old, and is owned by Secretary Tallens, of the club. Pedro is a brother of Lulu, the winner of the 500-mile race in Mississippi. Both are imported birds. When Pedro arrived at Mishawaka he flew straight to his loft, seeming none the worse for the journey.

During the year 1896 dead dogs to the number of 10,002 were taken out of Chicago.

BILL ARP ON MATRIMONY.

He Writes of Affectionate Husbands and Disdainful Wives.

QUOTES THE "WOMEN FOLKS."

Such That When They Marry Old They Imply an Agreement to Die in Short Time.

Whenever there is trouble and I can't give any relief or remedy, it distresses me, especially when the trouble is of a domestic character. Now here is a letter from a man who says, "I know a man—a neighbor—who is of a warm, affectionate, passionate nature and loves his wife to distraction, but she is calm and cold and conservative by nature and, therefore, indifferent to his caresses, and whenever he ventures to kiss her and puts his arms about her she repels him with such expressions as, 'Oh, Tom, get away; don't bother me.' She is a pure, good woman and loves her husband in her way, but she never meets him at the door when he comes home tired or disappointed with his day's work. The poor fellow is really pining away and languishing for lack of love—'per reciprocity, as it were, and can't get it. Now, what is the remedy? Can't you bring your universal philosophy to bear upon this case and solve the problem?"

No, I cannot. I am helpless. Nothing but time will equalize and harmonize that couple. I am afraid their union was a misfit, but he took her for better or worse and must be reconciled. In fact, he ought to be thankful in these degenerate days that he has found a pure, good woman, even if she is not as tumultuous in her love as he would like her to be. But time is a good doctor. Time will assuage him down some and will tone her up some, for a man and his wife get more and more alike as the years roll on. There were some good friends at my house last night and I seriously read to them this letter and asked for advice about answering it. They all agreed that the man was not writing about his neighbor, but was relating his own pitiful condition.

A married man said, "Write him to get away and quit bothering her when she says so."

A bachelor friend said, write him to flirt a little with another man's wife and she will come to her senses mighty quick and return his caresses."

"That is all you know about it," said another dame. "The flirtations of a husband destroy love and happiness, too. They are more apt to bring contempt and even scorn. A true woman will suffer and endure any fault or failing except that."

A young married woman said timidly, "she must be a very strange kind of a woman not to like caressing, but I do think she ought to meet him at the door and give him a smile or two when he comes home."

"He must be a right good man and I am sorry for him," said a lassie in her teens, or may be he is so horrid coarse and ugly that no self-respecting woman would want him bothering her for kisses caresses every time he came about," said a lassie out of her teens.

"Maybe he smoked and his breath was disagreeable," said a benedict who never used tobacco.

So I got but little comfort from this goody company and my wife continued the discourse by remarking in her quiet way, "Well, I think your friend had better have kept his misery to himself. Let him stick to the promises that he made at the altar."

"Or apply for a writ of mandamus and make her kiss him according to law," said a learned judge who was present. "I would make her reciprocate if the case was in my court. The writ of mandamus is a far-reaching and effectual process."

Well, of course the conversation drifted to the topic of May and December marriages, with grooms of more than three scores and ten and brides of tender years. We all agreed that if such a groom had anything to leave such a bride besides his name and would depart this life in a reasonable time, she was justified in marrying him. But in the first place the property should be in sight the "quid pro quo" and it should be fixed, settled, dowered, dovetailed, clinched upon her, and there should be an implied contract that he should die in strict accordance with the death rate, the expectation laid down in the life insurance tables. Indeed, if the late frequency of old men marrying young women is to be multiplied to an alarming extent, there should be established a death insurance office so that the young girl could go to it and get a policy insuring the old man's death in a limited time, and if he didn't die within the time, the company should pay her so much as she insured for—say \$5,000 or \$10,000 or \$20,000, as the case may be. With the money she could live decently and even secure a divorce on the ground of fraud—fraud in not dying according to hope and expectation and an implied promise.

Why, I know a lady who married an old man twenty-eight years ago. He was sixty and she but twenty and as sweet and pretty as a pink. He was rich and she was poor and he settled on her \$30,000, to be paid at his death. He looked like he would die in a year, but, bless your souls, my sweet young sisters, he is living yet and she looks nearly as old as he does. Her bloom of youth is gone. When she married she was an orphan and soon became worse than an orphan, and she is childless. What a mistake she made. What a fraud was perpetrated upon her. What a wreck of earthly happiness. Young girls, beware! These unions are not according to nature and they shock the judgment and sentiment of mankind. There are widows enough to take these venerable widowers, but let the maidens remain single if they cannot get a young man of their choice.

And now as a supplement to my late Indian letters, let me say that my inquiry about Lieutenant Paschal, who married Sarah, the half-breed daughter of John Ridge, has been answered by Mr. C. A. Lilly, a nephew of Judge George W. Paschal. Mr. Lilly's mother was Paschal's youngest sister, and died last year, aged 81. Mr. Lilly

now lives in St. Louis. His grandfather Paschal was a soldier under Sumner in the Revolutionary war and lived then in Savannah, Ga. Judge Paschal's eldest son, George W. Paschal, resides in Washington City. His second son, Ridge Paschal, is living with the Cherokees at Tablequah, I. T. His youngest daughter married T. P. O'Connor, a member of Parliament in London, England. Judge Paschal's most notable and enduring work was the annotated edition of the constitution and laws of the United States. He also wrote the memoirs of his mother, who lived to the great age of ninety-four years, which book Mr. Lilly has promised to send to me, as it contains a great deal of the history of north Georgia and the Cherokee Indians. Many younger citizens that I am have written me letters of thanks for these Indian sketches and asked for more. Maybe I will write some more when I learn more.—BILL ARP in Atlanta (Ga.) Constitution.

ABOUT THE CROPS.

Bauer's Weekly Bulletin Shows a Steady Decline.

The hot, generally dry weather caused cotton to open very fast, some prematurely, and two-thirds of the cotton is now open with about half of the crop picked. This applies to the whole State; in the eastern counties the proportion open and picked is somewhat greater. Full reports from every county indicate that there has been a steady decline in condition since the first of this month, and that during the past week the decline was due to excessive heat and drought, which caused the plant to shed young, immature bolls. The reports also indicate that there will be practically no top crop. That is to say, that cotton has either stopped taking on fruit since the middle of August, or that where it did fruit the bolls and squares dropped off.

No blooms were seen during the week except on moist bottom lands. Over about one-third of the State the estimated yield of lint per acre will equal an average, and over two-thirds it will fall short, so that, making due allowance for the increased acreage, correspondents estimate that the yield will be smaller than last year, and, generally, the worst reports come from the localities of usually heaviest production. In places where the plant is still green, rust is very prevalent, but many fields present the appearance of having been killed by frost.

Sea island cotton picking progressing rapidly; the crop, much of which is not yet matured, is looking remarkably fine, notwithstanding the existing moderate drought where this crop is cultivated.

Except over the extreme northwestern counties where corn was planted late, it was not adversely affected by the lack of rain and hot weather. The corn crop is now entirely safe and much of it has been gathered. Correspondents generally speak of it as a fair crop, in places, a large one.

The weather continued favorable for harvesting rice, and now there remains only late May and June plantings to be cut. Late rice is not as promising as the early rice, and in portions of Colleton the crop is very poor. Threshing rice is well under way.

Peas seem to be fruiting heavily notwithstanding that the leaves nearly all dropped off the vines during the past two weeks. Pea-vine hay is nearly all gathered.

It was too dry for sweet potatoes and over some of the western counties the yield will be short. Early varieties are yielding well.

Rain is needed for turnips and pastures, and to replenish the streams for stock water. Also for late sugar-cane.

DECLARED UNCONSTITUTIONAL.

Act Authorizing Assessing Property Holders for Street Improvement.

At Greenville Judge Watts' decree in the case of W. L. Mauldin vs. the city of Greenville has been filed sustaining the contention of the plaintiff that the city should be enjoined from collecting an assessment of two-thirds of the cost of the paving of the sidewalks on Main street. Judge Watts holds that the act under which the assessment was made is unconstitutional, and that even if it were not, that the assessments were improperly made. The decree is voluminous and discusses the recent acts of the Legislature with reference to street improvements and the new constitutional limitations as to the power of municipalities to contract debts. The case will go up on appeal to the Supreme Court.

Judge Watts also filed a decree in the case of Gentry vs. Lanneau. He decides that the transfer of his house and lot worth about \$12,000, to his wife, made by Mr. C. H. Lanneau several years ago, was not for the purpose of defrauding creditors. His reverses the master, who held that the property should be available as assets for payment of Lanneau's debt. The latter was the owner and manager of the Lanneau cotton mill, which was afterward sold to T. W. Earle.

Work on the Pythians' new Castle at Charleston is progressing rapidly.

Hail and wind did considerable damage to cotton in Orangeburg last week.

The College for Women will open this year with a largely increased attendance.

Norton's majority over Johnson in the second primary in the 6th district was 586. Total vote 8,868.

During a thunder storm Miss Susan Broadway, daughter of Mr. James Broadway, of Packville, Sumter county, was struck and instantly killed. She was sitting by an open window reading when struck and the book she had in her hand was burned. Two children were in the room, but neither of them was hurt. One was asleep and was not aroused, while another was thrown from a chair in which it was seated and the chair torn to pieces. About the same time a mule belonging to Mr. W. M. Broadway of the same neighborhood, a brother of Mr. James Broadway, was struck and killed.

Doctor (to female patient)—You have a slight touch of fever; your tongue has a thick coat— Patient (excitedly)—Oh, doctor, do tell me how it fits.— Fact and Fiction.

A POLL TAX PROBLEM.

Affects Delinquents Throughout the State.

GENERAL NORTON'S OPINION.

Refusal to Pay is Not a Misdemeanor and Not Punishable by Imprisonment—What He Says.

There are 700 delinquent poll tax owners in Richland county, and in the last day or two some trouble as to the magistrate's powers in collecting the tax has arisen. Comptroller General Norton has been consulted and has given his opinion. The same trouble that exists here obtains in every other county of the State. General Norton says:

"The confusion which has arisen in Richland county over the collection of delinquent poll taxes is but natural when the methods heretofore in use are remembered.

"It should be known that each annual session of the general assembly makes specific levies for each specific purpose, State, county and schools, including poll taxes, and provides specifically how these specific taxes are to be collected and applied.

"Each session of the general assembly since somewhere about 1885 made the non-payment of poll tax a misdemeanor, up to the session of 1896, when this clause was left out of the supply act. The non-payment of poll tax for 1895-96 and 1897, accordingly, is not a misdemeanor and the delinquent poll taxpayer cannot be indicted as heretofore for a misdemeanor.

"It is true that in the criminal statutes of South Carolina, Chapter XXI, section 377, there will be found such a provision, but a careful review of the statutes and this section (377) will show that this material was taken from Acts of 1892, page 43, and has reference to poll taxes of 1892-93 only and is of no force only for that specific fiscal year. The Constitution, which went into force, January 1st, 1896, made the non-payment of poll tax to disfranchise the voter.

"Accordingly, the General Assembly of 1896, the first session under the new Constitution, left out of the supply bill the clause making the non-payment of poll tax a misdemeanor, and the session of 1897 did the same thing. The results are that trial justices or magistrates cannot try or imprison poll tax payers for non-payment of poll taxes for the fiscal years 1896 (including November and December, 1895) and 1897, as there is no authority of law for such action.

"It is the duty of county treasurers to issue executions for delinquent poll tax payers as well as for all delinquent real and personal property. When the treasurer thus issues such executions and delivers the same to the sheriff, the sheriff can place the said executions in the hands of magistrates and authorize them to collect the same with legal costs thereon. This cost is \$1.00 for the treasurer and such costs as the law allows the sheriff in all matters of executions for taxes. In other words, there is no legal difference between the enforcement of an execution for the collection of a poll tax and for real and personal property so far as costs are concerned, and the issuing, returning and settling far same. The penalty for the non-payment of poll taxes now is disfranchisement—the delinquent cannot legally vote.

"In Richland county the treasurer has issued the executions, as we learn, and he or the sheriffs gave to the magistrates a list of those executions which they have been collecting with legal costs. No warrants have been issued, as we learn, but executions issued as above and costs followed legally.

"Any delinquent poll taxpayer for 1894-95 and previous years can be indicted for non-payment of poll tax, but not for 1896 and 1897.

"The decision of the supreme court, 1897 in reference to treasurers' costs of \$1.00 apply only where warrant has issued on affidavit of treasurer, but does not affect cases of executions issued by treasurer for non-payment of poll tax.

"Under the acts of 1896 and 1897 warrants cannot be issued by magistrates, but executions can be issued by county treasurers; therefore this decision of the supreme court does not affect or concern the issuing of executions or costs to treasurers or sheriffs therefor."

A RIOT IN GREENVILLE.

The City Chain-Gang Attacked by a Drunken Mob.

A special from Greenville to the Register, says a small riot occurred here, which came near resulting seriously. Tom and George Rigdon, of Pickens, and S. E. Lark and George Tinsley, of Piedmont, white men, were in the city, and got on a spree. Wandering around they came upon the city chain-gang convict force working on the streets in the northern part of the city. One of the negro convicts was working some distance from the force, and the four men made an attack on him with sticks and rocks. He called for help, and Street Overseer Poole ran to his assistance. Half a dozen of the convicts ran to the aid of Poole, and a lively battle followed, the weapons being rocks and clubs.

During the fight Poole drew his pistol and was on the point of shooting George Tinsley, who seemed to be the most aggressive of the raiders, but did not have to shoot, as one of the convicts landed a rock on Tinsley's head, knocking him senseless.

Two of the attacking party were badly wounded by the convicts and all four were captured, the convicts, under orders of Overseer Poole, acting as police. The convicts escorted the four prisoners to the station house, where their wounds were dressed. Tinsley and Tom Rigdon are seriously hurt.

The remarkable part of the affair is that no convict attempted to escape, and after landing the prisoners in the guardhouse all returned to work as if nothing had happened.

No woman can be sick very long without getting religious.